

**APPENDIX 5** Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for WSAs  
(Excerpt from H-8550-1 - INTERIM MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR LANDS UNDER  
WILDERNESS REVIEW; Section J: Fire Management; pgs 48-49)

**NOTE: The following policy and guidance refers exclusively to fire management within WSAs. This is only a portion of the INTERIM MANAGEMENT POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR LANDS UNDER WILDERNESS REVIEW handbook (H-8550-1). Do not take this information out of context. For complete policy and guidance regarding WSAs, refer to H-8550-1 (1995).**

The BLM will conduct all prescribed fire and suppression activities in accordance with fire management activity plans and subsequent operational plans (prescribed fire and preattack) for all WSAs, using caution to avoid unnecessary impairment of an area's suitability for preservation as wilderness. "Light-Hand-On-The-Land" fire suppression tactics will be used. Fire is a natural component of many wilderness ecosystems and fire plans need to give serious consideration to this fact before recommending one fire management technique over another. Resource area advisors will use the fire plans in making decisions during emergency fire situations and prescribed ignitions. All uses of earth moving equipment within a WSA require authorization. Priority for placement of large fire camps should be outside WSAs. Use of motorized vehicles and mechanical equipment during mop-up should be minimized.

The fire preattack plan covering a WSA will specify the fire management objectives and special considerations for each WSA, taking into account a number of factors including the existing wilderness characteristics of the area, the need to prevent impairing actions, historic fire occurrence, the natural role of fire, proposed degree of suppression, expected fire behavior, acceptable suppression techniques, adequate buffer zones, smoke management, effect on private or other agency inholdings and on adjacent landowners, the limits of acceptable fire weather, fire behavior, fire effects, and the access requirements of other agencies. In planning firebreaks, the use of natural firebreaks and existing roads is encouraged. Emergency fire rehabilitation measures will continue to be carried out under guidelines in Handbook H-1742-1 and Manual Section 1742. Efforts should be made to rehabilitate any impacts created by suppression activities prior to releasing fire crews and associated equipment following fire containment.

To hold fire to the desired level within WSAs, fire management procedures and plans will rely on: (1) the most effective methods of suppression that are least damaging to wilderness values (i.e. "light-hand-on-the-land" techniques), other resources, and the environment, while requiring the least expenditure of public funds including rehabilitation of the area; (2) an aggressive fire prevention program; and (3) an integrated cooperative suppression program by agencies of the Department among themselves or with other qualified suppression organizations. Present suppression methods may be used, including use of power tools, aircraft, motorboats, and motorized firefighting equipment while applying "Light-hand-on-the-land" techniques. Existing fire lookout towers and helispots may be used and maintained; new ones may be approved as part of the fire management activity plan if they are the minimum necessary for fire suppression in the WSA.

Fire managers should inform suppression personnel during dispatch that the fire is in a WSA and that special constraints apply. Memoranda of Understanding with other agencies should contain stipulations reflecting wilderness interim management guidance. Fire managers should notify Area Managers of any unsuccessful initial attack action on a fire in a WSA before developing the Escaped Fire Situation Analysis.